From the Secretary of the Bombay ...
to the Royal Asiatic Society

EGYPT

AND

MAHOMED ALI PACHA,

IN 1837.

Price One Shilling.

962·03
Hol/Egy
27245

00027245

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 July, 2018

EGYPT

AND

MAHOMED ALI PACHA,

IN

1837;

27245

A LETTER,

CONTAINING

REMARKS UPON "EGYPT AS IT IS IN 1837."

ADDRESSED TO THE

RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT PALMERSTON,

HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

&c. &c.

1934

RR F68

BY ARTHUR T. HOLROYD, ESQ.

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY AND SONS, 169, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXXXVIII.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

EGYPT,

AND

MAHOMED ALI PACHA,

IN 1837.

My Lord,

Before entering upon the subject of this letter, it will be necessary to premise the reasons which have induced me to trouble you with an account of the actual state of Egypt and Soodan, and of the political and physical conditions of these countries, which are included in the dominions of Mahomed Ali Pacha.

On the 25th day of September, 1836, I arrived at Alexandria, with the intention of visiting Cairo, Upper Egypt, Nubia, and Soodan; and, on the 16th of October in the same year, embarked for the purpose of exploring the countries just mentioned.

According to the geography of the Turkish governors, the Belled of Soodan is comprised between

Wady Halfa to the north, and Abyssinia and the parts beyond Gebel Fungi to the south; its eastern boundary is the Red Sea, and to the west and south west, it includes Darfoor, Gebel Nooba, Tegalee, &c., &c., which are not subject to the Viceroy—Kordofan being the limit of his kingdom in this direction.

The route which I adopted was as follows:—From Wady Halfa (the second cataract of the Nile), I proceeded by the west bank of the river to New Dongola; then by the Nile to Ambukol, from whence I crossed the desert of Bachooda to Kartoom; from Kartoom I visited Sennar, and having returned to Wad Medinah, crossed the desert between it and Mongara, and arrived at the White Nile. From this point I struck into the desert of Habshahbah, to proceed to Kordofan, and having spent sixteen days there, returned to the river by the desert of Sakkra; from Mongara, I descended the Nile to Kartoom, and afterwards continued my journey to Shendy and Berber; from thence I passed the desert to Meroe; embarked for New Dongola, and returned by the west bank of the Nile to Wady Halfa.

I was absent from Cairo on these travels nearly a year, and arrived at the Egyptian metropolis on the 1st of the present month. On my return, I found that a pamphlet, entitled "Egypt as it is in 1837," by Mr. Thomas Waghorn, lately appointed, I understand, Deputy Agent to the Hon E. I. Company, had been distributed at Cairo, and I was informed

that it had been very extensively circulated in Great Britain. As it contains so many erroneous statements respecting Egypt, and appears to have been written to mislead, rather than guide the British Government; as it praises, most inconsistently, the political conduct of one, whose life has been devoted to acts of barbarism, oppression, and tyranny over his subjects; and lastly, as it savours so strongly of an appearance to curry political favour* with the Viceroy, by flattery and misrepresentation; I feel on this account the more anxious to submit to the consideration of your Lordship, a few of the many facts which have come within my personal knowledge and observation during the past year, and which will be found to be completely at variance with the ideas of Mr. Waghorn; and then, having examined both statements, your Lordship will be better able to form an opinion of the policy necessary to pursue towards Egypt.

* Since the appointment of Mr. Waghorn as Deputy Agent to the Hon. E. I. Company, he has had frequent interviews with Mahomed Ali, and upon one occasion, was closeted with the Viceroy with closed doors. What took place during this mysterious interview, has never transpired. It can hardly be supposed that these visits could only have had reference to building a coal magazine of reeds, and making arrangements for the transport of coals and the mails from Cairo to Suez with camels; objects which are effected here with the greatest facility. It is much more probable that these receptions were connected with some political intrigue, as Mr. Waghorn's pamphlet has been translated into the Turkish language, and read to Mahomed Ali and Ibrahim Pacha.

It is the opinion of most travellers who are conversant with Egypt, (and among them I cannot class the author* of "Egypt as it is in 1837,") that the country never was in such an unfortunate state as at present. The rich valley of the Nile, whose productions are amply sufficient for a much larger population than can now be found, is almost entirely monopolized by Mahomed Ali. His selfish and oppressive system of government, has reduced his subjects to the most abject slavery. His exorbitant demands for replenishing his army, to satisfy his cruel and ambitious projects, have removed from their native soil most of the effective labourers; and many of the peasants, who were not serviceable for the army, have been torn from their homes, separated for ever from their wives and families, and compelled to drag on a miserable and toilsome existence in his arsenal. His governors or deputies pillage the Fellah of the little that should remain after the demands of the Pacha are satisfied, and he is driven to despair in answering the calls of him and his local authorities.

The greatest improvement that Mahomed Ali has introduced into Egypt, is the seminaries for diffusing education amongst his people; and, acting upon the suggestions of his French advisers, he has within these few years opened the following schools:—

* Mr. Waghorn never was higher than Geneh, and his journies from Cairo to Geneh have been on business, and executed with dispatch.

	By whom Managed.	Number of Pupils.
School of Infantry Officers at Damietta	A French Officer	400
„ Cavalry Officers at Geezeh	Colonel Varin (a Frenchman)	300*
„ Artillery at Toora	An Arab, educated in the School of Engineers	400†
„ Engineers at Boolaq	Hekekan Effendi (an Armenian, educated in England)	180
Marine School at Alexandria	A Turk	740(?)
School of Medicine at Kasserelayne	M. Duvignon (a Frenchman)	200(?)
Midwives School in the Esbekeëh (Slave Girls from the Pacha's Hareem)		12
Veterinary School at Schoobra	M. Amand (a Frenchman)	100(?)
School for Agriculturists, at the Experimental Farm at Zagazig	Yussef Effendi (an Armenian, educated in France)	120
„ of Interpreters (where the French, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Languages are taught)	Sheik Réfaa (an Arab, educated in France)	200‡
„ „ Music at Hanka	An Arab (educated in France)	160(?)
Preparatory School at Aboozable	An Arab, Raafet Effendi	1400
School for forming Accountants at Settezenob, after the European method of keeping books, with the view of abolishing the Coptic writers	Selim Effendi (educated in France)	140
School for Weighers and Measures at Boolaq	An Arab	20
„ „ Engravers at Boolaq (newly established)	An Arab, Hassan Effendi (educated in France)	10
„ „ Miners (the Cadets belonging to this school have been lately sent, some to Syria, and others to Austria, for the purpose of completing their studies, and to gain practical knowledge)		20
§Primary Schools, fifty in number, of which two belong to Cairo, the one at Settezenob, and the other at Hanka	All directed by Arabs	10,000
	Total	14,402

* Orders have been given to add 200 to the indicated number.

† This was the original number. The present number is 135.

‡ Besides the above number, there are numerous day scholars (sons of Armenians, Greeks, &c.) who attend. The school, properly speaking, is composed of poor Fellah children, from the provinces.

§ Schools in which the education is quite elementary.

So unpopular were these schools at their commencement, because under the management of the government, that much difficulty was experienced in obtaining pupils, and the Pacha was obliged to resort to the system of impressment at first, and actually pay* (a mode which is still adopted) the boys for receiving instruction.

From this table it will be observed, that, of the sixteen schools (exclusive of the Primary), four are managed by Frenchmen, and five by Arabs, educated in France, whilst one only is managed by an Armenian who received his education in England.

I have been particular in stating the numbers of boys educated at these Institutions, and the total amount to 14,402, which does not agree with the statement of the author of "Egypt as it is in 1837," who boldly asserts that 20,000 youths are receiving instruction at these seminaries.

Nubia and Soodan cannot boast of the munificence of the Pacha in establishing schools in this part of his dominions.

Many of the Arabs who have been instructed in

* The Government pays each scholar per month, as follows:—First year, 2 *pias.* 20 *para.*—2nd, 2 *p.* 10 *p.*—3rd, 5 *p.*—4th, 10 *p.*—5th, 15 *p.*—6th, 20 *p.*—7th, 25 *p.*—8th, 30 *p.*—9th, 35 *p.*—10th, 40 *p.*—11th, 45 *p.*—12th, 50 *p.*—13th, 60 *p.*—14th, 70 *p.*—15th, 80 *p.*—But in each school the corporal receives five piastres more than the student who is merely in the ranks. The sergeant ten piastres, and the sergeant-major fifteen.

One pound sterling, equals 97½ piastres.

England and France, have profited little by the education they have received; and in proof of what I am asserting, I may mention the following as one of many facts. An Englishman was the chief moulder and superintendant of the iron foundry at Boolaq, but was suspended some time ago for the purpose of ascertaining if two Arabs educated in England were capable of managing this department. After repeated trials in casting, they were found to be so utterly incompetent for the task, although long employed in the foundry previously, that the government was obliged to re-instate the Englishman, and the Arabs were placed at inferior work.

The army of Mahomed Ali Pacha is raised in two ways, by impressment of the Fellahs, and by the Gazzua, or annual war which he wages against the blacks.

The author of "Egypt as it is," (at p. 16) has the following paragraph: "That Mahomed Ali has been "obliged to take some of this class of his people "(Fellahs) for soldiers I seek not to deny—neces-"sity demanded it. The system has however been "discontinued in Egypt, never, I trust, to be revived. "As far as Egypt is concerned, recruits are now "supplied from Nubia and Sennar. The Fellahs of "Egypt are no longer required for the purpose."

On the 23rd of August, I arrived at Essouan, on my return to Cairo; on the 10th of September at Geneh; and on the 13th of the same month at Geergeh. At the former of these places I spent

seven days; at Geneh two, and at Geergeh five; and at each of them I not only learnt that they were impressing, but at Geergeh, one of the sailors of my boat was seized for military service, though subsequently liberated. During my stay at Geergeh, I visited Arabat el Matfoon, the site of the ancient Abydos, and here I was informed by the local governor, that for the last two months he had been requested to recruit for the army, but almost without success; for as soon as the Fellahs heard that such an order was issued, they immediately removed one or more joints of the first finger of the right hand, on purpose to render themselves unserviceable; and I noticed many of them with their fingers bound up, suffering from the effects of recent mutilation*.

The governor of Arabat also mentioned that so many men were now mutilated, that in the eighteen villages which he commands, it would be impossible to find two men fit for military service. A most frightful account, when it is considered that the neighbourhood of Geergeh is one of the most popu-

* It is impossible to enter a village between Essouan and Cairo, without noticing almost all the males who are fit for military service, mutilated in one of the three following manners:—

The right eye destroyed.

The teeth, which are employed in tearing open the cartridge, extracted.

One or more joints of the first finger of the right hand removed. So great a dread have they of impressment, that a fine healthy man may be frequently seen mutilated in two or even all the above ways.

lous and productive agricultural districts of the Pacha*.

Mahomed Ali is aware of the difficulty experienced in procuring Arab soldiers, and it is now currently rumoured in Cairo, that he has very serious intentions of raising a legion from the Coptic Christians; a class of persons who, up to the present time, have only been pressed into his civil service.

Though impressment is still carried on in Upper Egypt, it has for some time been discontinued in Nubia, between the first and second cataracts; principally, as I learnt, because the Pacha has no troops, or Turkish local governors, here, to prevent outrage upon the recruiting authorities; and also that, upon intelligence of impressment arriving, the Nubians would, in many places, leave their native soil and assume a Bedoween life.

In many parts of Soodan, the Pacha has within the last few years impressed for the army in the Hedjaz, but has relinquished his intention of recruiting natives in this part of his kingdom; because he found that a great proportion of those taken died on their way to the military stations; and those left

* The Kaschef of Geergeh informed me that, during the four months preceding the time I visited it, he had received tribute from the Fellahs of sixty villages, amounting to 5000 purses (about 25,000*l.*), on account of the government, and that 2,200 purses (about 11,000*l.*) was actually paid in cash—the remainder in wheat, barley, dhourra, &c.

in the villages betook themselves, with their families, to the mountains, to avoid enduring a similar fate.

Whilst at Kartoom, in the month of May, I formed an acquaintance with an officer from the Hedjaz, who mentioned that he had orders to raise 3000 recruits; but, that though he had been there several months, he had been unable to procure a single man, and looked forward to the results of the Gazzua for providing him with the required number. At Berber also, in the month of June, I found a recruiting officer from the Hedjaz, who had been residing there six months, and had raised eight hundred recruits; but had adopted, under orders probably from head quarters, a novel and rather extraordinary mode of obtaining his object: he seized the slaves, the property of the Fellahs, and compelled the latter to dispose of them at 300 piastres each, though in almost every instance the slave would fetch a considerably higher price in the bazaar, than that which the Fellah was compelled to receive from the emissary of the Pacha.

But the most cruel mode of replenishing his army and increasing his revenue, and one unparalleled in modern times, is, by the Gazzua, or annual war, which he wages against the blacks. For this purpose, two or three expeditions are dispatched in different directions, in the months of September and October. The troops at Kordofan are generally ordered to Gebel Nooba; those at Sennar and Wad

Medinah to Gebel Fungi, Gebel Sidduk, or Denka; and those at Kartoom, with reinforcements from Wad Medinah, to the country of the Shillooks on the White Nile, or to the confines of Abyssinia on the river Rahad.

Immediately upon my arrival in Kordofan, in the month of March, I visited the then governor, Mustapha Bey, who had just returned from the Gazzua at Gebel Nooba, with 2187 captives*, including men, women, and children. The physician to the forces was selecting the able bodied men for the army; but so repeatedly has the Pacha waged war against this chain of mountains, that the population has been completely drained; and from the above number only 250 were deemed fit for military service. These unfortunate individuals were marched down to Kartoom, fourteen days' journey, completely naked; and to add to their misery, a wooden stake, six or seven feet long, and forked at one extremity, was attached to the neck of one by means of a cross bar, retained in its position, with strips of bull's hide; to the other end of the stake an iron ring was fastened, which encircled the throat of another of these poor and harmless creatures. They were then unmercifully driven to Kartoom, with scarcely any thing to eat on the journey, and compelled to traverse a burning desert, with a very sparing and scanty supply of

* This was the number of captives, but I also ascertained that a great many were killed by the military whilst defending themselves.

water. They were dispatched in companies of fifties, and so great were their privations and fatigue on the journey, that a letter arrived at Kordofan, addressed to Mustapha Bey, from Korshid Pacha of Kartoom, (the Governor-General of Soodan), and which was publicly read during a visit I made to the divan of the former, in which the latter stated, that of fifty slaves that had left Kordofan some days before, only thirty-five were living on the arrival of the caravan at Kartoom.

But this is not the most heart-rending and appalling sequel of the Gazzua, and I would gladly have spared myself the narration of a fact of which I was an eye-witness; but as the circumstances of the disposition of the remaining prisoners are not generally known, nay, are scarcely credited even in Cairo, I feel, on this account, less compunction in stating that which I actually beheld.

At my first visit to Mustapha Bey, on the 30th of March (the day of my arrival in Kordofan), I found him in the court before the divan, arranging between three hundred and four hundred slaves, part of the produce of his expedition, for the purpose of distributing them to the soldiers, in lieu of pay. These slaves were arranged according to size and sex. In one division were placed the old and infirm women, the pregnant females, and young girls; in a second, boys, about the age from eight to twelve years; in a third, children from four to eight years old; in a fourth, infants from one and a half to four years of

age. If they could be said to have any pretensions to beauty or utility, the women and girls were also placed according to their appearance; but the females were the refuse of their sex, the handsome having been previously disposed of, by sale, for the hareems of the Turks and Arabs. The disposition was made according to the military rank of the individual, and he was compelled to receive one-half of his arrears in human flesh, and the other half in money. In distributing them, one or two were taken from each division, and an officer with the rank of captain received four adults and three children in lieu of eighteen hundred piastres; whilst one adult slave was given between two private soldiers. Upon receiving the slaves, the officers and soldiers immediately conducted their property to their habitations; and whilst one of the former was leaving the court, my attention was attracted to an infant, two and a half years of age, who rushed towards a female, whom I afterwards learned was its mother, and seizing her, clung with the most filial affection, imploring her to resume that parental protection which it so highly valued, until a Turkish soldier, aroused from a state of apathy by the cries of the child, tore it from its fondest hopes, and instantly separated it for ever from her, who, alone, could afford it comfort and consolation in such a necessitous and helpless condition.

Revolting as such sights are to the feelings of an Englishman, I cannot omit, however, mentioning

one other fact. A soldier, who had been taken from Gebel Nooba a year and a half ago, and who had repaired to the divan to receive his share of the produce of the Gazzua, recognised amongst the crowd his younger brother, a boy about five or six years old, who had just been captured. He had placed him upon his knee, and was caressing him most affectionately, when Mustapha Bey observed the circumstance: he inquired from the soldier who the boy was, and learning that he was his brother, turned to the scribe, and inquired his value. The latter replied, "four or five dollars:" then, said the governor, "let him take him for three, and place "this sum to his account." Thus was a soldier of Mahomed Ali Pacha, the "regenerator," the "civi- "liser" of Egypt, compelled to receive his own brother in part payment of his arrears.

Independent of the cruelty of this method of paying the troops, a very great injustice is also practised upon them. A slave, for instance, is given by the government instead of three hundred or three hundred and fifty piastres, which, when brought to sale, will not realize more than one-half or two-thirds of that sum, and thus the account of the soldier with the paymaster is made to appear considerably more than he actually receives.

In other parts of Soodan the troops are paid in part with coarse cotton cloth, manufactured in the country, but with the same degree of injustice.

The mortality amongst the slaves sent as recruits to Kartoom, when commencing military discipline, is very great, and the principal causes of their death appeared to be nostalgia, change of diet, fatigue in crossing the desert from Kordofan to Kartoom, scarcity of water and food on the journey, and the pronged stake which they are compelled to wear for a month or six weeks, without being removed.

I have come to the conclusion that impressment for the army will soon be no longer feasible in Egypt and Soodan, in consequence of the continual drainage of the blacks from the mountains of the latter, and because so many of the Fellahs of the former have been compelled to leave their native soil, or mutilate themselves to avoid enlistment.

It is not only his own troops who are deceived by the Pacha, Europeans are sent to Kartoom, and other parts of Soodan, upon the most inexcusable misrepresentations and fallacious promises. Three Italians, for example, arrived during my stay at Kartoom, as apothecaries to the army. They were told previous to leaving Cairo, that they could draw all their arrears of rations upon arriving at their destination; but when they applied to Korshid Pacha, for what was their due, the answer they received was, "We can only give you half your arrears." This they refused to accept, and memorialized the minister of war. Formerly the value of rations was given to Europeans in money, but this has been

discontinued, principally, as I was informed, to disgust them with his service, and compel him to employ the students from the Medical Institution of Clot-Bey; a lamentable circumstance for the sick, as I witnessed one of these *savans* endeavouring to effect a cure with amulets instead of medicine. Lately the Pacha has sent a veterinary surgeon to Soodan, and what appears rather paradoxical, he pays him double what he pays to an European physician to his forces. So little does he appear to regard the health of his army, and so anxious is he to increase his revenue by the transport of camels and cattle from different parts of Soodan to Cairo.

Of a country which pretends to "civilization," there is still one circumstance which must not be omitted; I allude to the manufactories, (for I can use no more expressive term) of eunuchs. At Kordofan, the emasculating system is carried to a prodigious extent, and this operation is performed principally by the brother of the late King of Darfoor, and the wretch is at this moment receiving a pension and rations from Mahomed Ali. From inquiries that I made, I ascertained that no less than one hundred and fifty boys were submitted every year to his cruelty and barbarity, and that an equal number were also mutilated by other wretches in Kordofan; thus Kordofan furnishes about three hundred eunuchs annually for the hareems of the Turks. But this disgusting operation is not confined

to Soodan, nay, at Es-tioot, which is situated only a few days' journey from Cairo, and which the Pacha is visiting, whilst I am inditing this letter, the slaves from Darfoor are submitted to similar brutalities for the purpose of enhancing their value; a circumstance with which Mahomed Ali must be thoroughly acquainted, but which he openly sanctions with unblushing effrontery, and apathetic indifference.

When I returned to Kartoom in May, I first learned the intelligence of the war against Abyssinia, and that the massacre of the Pacha's troops occurred during an eclipse of the moon on the 20th of April. From the best information I was able to collect, it appeared that Korshid Pacha had dispatched from 1500 to 2000 troops* to Abyssinia; that the route they had taken was by the Blue Nile, to the mouth of the river Kahad, (which is situated in about 14° 30′ N. L.) The troops followed the course of the river, and having passed Kallabat, arrived at the Abyssinian frontier; they then passed some distance into the country. It was mentioned at Kartoom, that they crossed the boundary of Abyssinia, under the pretext of merely gratifying their curiosity with a view, and not with any hostile intention; a most improbable circumstance, as the expedition appeared, from all I could learn, to have been equipped for offensive,

* These were the numbers given me at Kartoom, but I have heard since my return to Cairo, that the number of troops was 850, and I am inclined to think this the most correct.

rather than defensive measures. Their ammunition however was scanty, and speedily expended, and the Abyssinians, in number (it was reported) amounting to forty thousand, had driven them back across the frontier to Rasheb, and here the massacre took place. They rushed upon the Pacha's troops during the night, threw the camp into the greatest confusion, murdered the soldiers, (their muskets being now useless,) secured the Commander of the expedition, together with the Commander of Artillery, and a few others as prisoners; and subsequently sent to Kartoom to inform Korshid Pacha that they were willing to allow him to ransom the troops according to a certain exorbitant scale which they remitted him; and that if he did not accede to their terms, they would avenge themselves upon the Pacha, by emasculating the prisoners*. The Pacha immediately dispatched Mustapha Bey, at the head of four hundred troops, and two pieces of artillery, to the scene of action; but upon arriving at Aboo Haraz, he heard that the Abyssinians were still prepared for warlike engagements, and prudently

* Many of the troops who were murdered on the 20th of April, were Moggrebin cavalry; and I was informed at Benagga Keeber, a village of considerable size, situated about twenty miles south of Shendy, that of two hundred and fifty mounted Moggrebins that accompaned the sheik of this village in the expedition against Abyssinia, two hundred and forty-four were massacred, and that the sheik himself was taken prisoner.

returned to Kartoom, rather than sacrifice these remaining troops to the fury of a provoked and reckless enemy.

Couriers were despatched to Cairo, to inform Mahomed Ali of the reception of his Abyssinian expedition; and Korshid Pacha, acting I rather think upon his own responsibility, commenced preparations for a second expedition, to be despatched after the khareef, or rainy season, about the month of August or September. But a deficiency in Arab troops, a want of military discipline amongst the blacks, recently taken in the Gazzua, and perhaps a distrust of the courage of the latter, induced his highness to demand the services of the Kaschefs and Agas, together with their Turkish dependants or guards, to be ready to accompany Mustapha Bey to recover the laurels, which the first expedition had so disgracefully and ingloriously lost. I had opportunities of seeing many of the guards of these Turkish governors, and more ridiculous looking troops I never saw. They were old (many of them being above sixty years of age), infirm and indolent, and appeared to be conscious that there was little chance of success, unless they received considerable reinforcements from the Arab army.

Since I returned to Cairo, it has been rumoured that the Abyssinians have descended into the Pacha's territories, that the troops have been again routed, and that Korshid Pacha has been obliged to retire to Berber.

LIBRARY

Mahomed Ali, however, appears determined to endeavour to push his conquests to Abyssinia, and to add this country to his already extensive and misruled dominions. Three regiments, amounting to about ten thousand men, are at this moment preparing to leave Cairo for Kartoom and Sennar; and if England* should not peremptorily demand of the Pacha, to desist from prosecuting such an unnecessary war, it is not improbable, that we may see, ere long, this country, in which still exist remnants of Christianity, compelled to bear the oppressive yoke of a Mahomedan government, and suffer similar degradation and tyranny, to that, which his subjects are enduring in every part of his kingdom. The Abyssinians are far from wishing to engage in a sanguinary war, but they have courage to maintain their independence, and endeavour to resist foreign aggression. They have seen sufficient of the policy of Mahomed Ali to know that he is actuated only by mercenary and interested motives, and they are not anxious to submit quietly to a government which is universally deprecated and abhorred by its subjects.

The monopolies of the Pacha have almost entirely destroyed the commerce of Abyssinia, and the countries south of Sennar; ostrich feathers, ivory, ebony, and gold, are brought down now in very limited quantities*. The whole of Soodan is supplied with

* Mahomed Ali has made use of this expression, within the last nine months:—"I am anxious to make war against Abyssinia, but I am afraid of my friends the English." And his ground

coffee from Abyssinia; but the war had the effect of preventing the Pacha benefiting longer by the monopoly of this commodity, as all commercial transactions between the two countries had temporarily ceased.

Slaves are almost the only articles of commerce, from Abyssinia and Soodan, upon which a monopoly does not exist. But, in consideration of a free trade in slaves, the Pacha exacts from the jellaps, or merchants, a heavy duty, which answers his purpose better than maintaining the monopoly in his own possession.

The exports from Soodan generally consist of slaves, eunuchs, Abyssinian coffee, hides, gold, gum arabic, indigo, cattle, and camels.

The gum arabic is exported from Kordofan; and the government compels the Fellah, or proprietor, to dispose of it for one hundred and fifty piastres the camel load of five quantars*; which quantity will realize 1200 or 1300 piastres at Cairo.

In all parts of the country south of New Dongola, the indigo plant thrives most luxuriantly; but the Fellah is loathe to grow it, because it is one of the articles upon the list of monopolies of Mahomed Ali. It is therefore only produced by compulsion.

of alarm appeared to be, an idea, that there was considerable commerce between India and Abyssinia, to protect which, England would interfere.

* The quantar is about 98lbs. and three quarters avoirdupois.

27245

Within the last fifteen months, the viceroy has requested Korshid Pacha to forward to Cairo 6,000 camels, and 10,000 head of cattle. The order for half the latter arrived whilst I was in Soodan. Korshid Pacha furnished one thousand from the villages around Kartoom, and the governors of New Dongola, Berber, Sennar and Kordofan, were ordered to provide a similar number. Mahomed Ali remitted to Kartoom sufficient funds to purchase the cattle, at an average of seventy-five piastres per head (about fourteen shillings and ten-pence), a most iniquitous and arbitrary exaction, as the intrinsic value of each head of cattle was from one hundred to one hundred and fifty piastres. Then, again, most of the Turkish governors, to save themselves unnecessary trouble, paid seventy-five piastres for each, indiscriminately, whilst one only (that I observed), the governor of Berber, priced the cattle according to their size and appearance.

On my way to Kordofan, at the village of Aboogarat, situated about eight hours journey from the White Nile, I noticed the Caimakan, a Turkish governor, flogging severely five or six persons, whom I ascertained upon inquiry, were sheiks, or native governors of several districts which he commanded, and whose subjects had driven their cattle some days' journey into the mountains, to avoid having them seized to answer the calls of the Pacha. The sheiks, as soon as they had been deserted by their neighbours, had repaired to Aboogarat, and having informed the

Caimakan of the predicament in which they were placed, immediately produced money to pay for the cattle, which he had requested them to procure, at the price which the Pacha himself had desired his deputies to purchase them. But, as the orders of Mahomed Ali were peremptory, the Turk compelled them to undergo the torturing pain and indelible disgrace of a public chastisement, in consequence of the neglect of his commands; and then dismissing them, said, "that if they came again to him, without the "required number of cattle, he would send them down "in irons to Kartoom."

I must now leave Soodan, and returning to Upper Egypt, mention the restrictions which the Pacha has recently placed upon the sale of wheat, and which, if continued, must produce famine amidst plenty in the fertile and luxuriant valley of the Nile. The price of wheat six weeks ago, in Upper Egypt, was fifty piastres the ardeb*, whilst at Cairo it was one hundred and three. Mahomed Ali, being always alive to increasing his revenue by mercantile speculations, wrote to the local governors, to request them to buy up all the wheat in the possession of the Fellahs at fifty, and not to pay for the grain in cash, but deduct it from the account of the agriculturists. For in satisfying the rapacious demands of the Pacha, in meeting the unjust requests of his deputies, in being pillaged by his inferior officers, and lastly, in

* The ardeb is nearly equivalent to five English bushels.

being compelled, in many instances, to pay to the government the debts of others, who are defaulters, or who set the authorities at defiance, the Fellah is compelled to contract an infinity of obligations, which it is almost impossible for him ever to be able to liquidate. The Fellahs resisted the order; and the price of wheat rose to seventy-five piastres, and could only be brought to the boats clandestinely from their houses, because they had denied to the government that they had any wheat in their possession.

On the 1st of October, the price of wheat in Cairo was one hundred and fourteen piastres the ardeb, and on the 20th, it had reached one hundred and sixty-five. Mahomed Ali, to prevent further speculation amongst his subjects, then issued an order that no merchant should sell wheat for more than one hundred. The effect of such an arbitrary measure is, that scarcely any bread is to be found in Cairo, and at the time I am writing, the greatest difficulty is experienced in procuring bread in the Bazaar.

Again, the Nile* has risen very inconsiderably during the present year, and the irrigation of the land is so comparatively trifling, that if the Pacha does not disgorge, at a reasonable price, some of the immense mountains of wheat, which are contained in the government granaries, it is feared that

* The rise of the Nile is less this year than it has been for five or six years past.

famine and revolution will be the inevitable results of his selfish and oppressive restrictions. The military, who have been employed in digging canals in Egypt, have already shewn mutinous conduct. Upper Egypt is in an unsettled state, and the Fellahs appear inclined to revolt; and the inhabitants of many villages have already commenced to rob and pillage to support themselves, near Es-sioot. I heard of several boats being plundered of very considerable property during the night, whilst descending the river; and parts of the Nile above Cairo, which might be past a year ago with safety, cannot now be past without incurring danger. In many places it is absolutely necessary to have guards from the villages for protection.

Mahomed Ali has expressed an opinion that he should be glad so see all Europeans leave Egypt, as they are now occupying the posts in trades, &c., which might be as efficiently filled by his Arab subjects. In the *Journal de Smyrne* there is an article which I think it right to transcribe, because it shews that the Pacha is taking unwarrantable and groundless liberties with Europeans, adopting an espionage upon them, without reason for such proceedings, and probably endeavouring, by such means, to drive them from his kingdom, by harassing and annoying them:—" Le gouvernement poursuit " impunément son incroyable systême de vexations " à l'égard des Européens. Ces jours-ci encore, une " maison française a été victime de sa brutalité.

" Sous prétexte qu'un des domestiques de M. ..... " était renfermé dans un magasin de son maître " avec une femme Arabe, des agens de police, ac- " compagnés d'un piquet de dix soldat armés, ont " exigé avec menaces l'ouverture immédiate de ce " magasin ; ce qui a eu lieu à l'insu du propriétaire. " Les perquisitions les plus minutieuses n'ayant eu " d'autre résultat que de prouver l'absence de tout " delinquant du dit magasin, il est demeuré assez " clairement demontré que cet acte arbitraire n'avait " eu d'autre but que de visiter le magasin de ce " négociant, pour s'assurer s'il contenait effective- " ment certaines marchandises qu'on disait y être. " Cette affaire a fait beaucoup de bruit, et le con- " sul de France, M. de Lesseps, dont on apprécie " chaque jour davantage la fermeté et le zèle pour " la défense des intérêts de ses nationaux, l'a prise " chaudement et met beaucoup de vigueur à de- " mander justice d'une semblable violation des " capitulations. Resté à savoir maintenant s'il " l'obtiendra et s'il sera soutenu par son gouverne- " ment, ce que de nombreux antécédens rendent " assez douteux*." This is one of many vexatious proceedings of a similar kind, and of almost daily occurrence.

It is impossible to conjecture what may be the political position of Egypt after the demise of Mahomed Ali Pacha. It has been rumoured in

* *Journal de Smyrne*, Sept. 16, 1836.

Cairo that the Viceroy has lately endeavoured to exact a promise from the Sultan, that Ibrahim should succeed to the government of Egypt after his death; and that the Sultan rejected the application, as interfering with his prerogative. It appears from this more than probable, that the Porte does not wish to see Egypt enslaved and enthralled by the future governor of her colony, or, at all events, that she prefers reserving the appointment for one who does not possess the ambition of Mahomed Ali. A civil war may be the result of such an appointment; and I question if Ibrahim possess sufficient influence with the Porte, or confidence with the military and the people, to ensure his being placed quietly upon the Divan of Egypt. The Sultan's eyes must be sufficiently open to see the necessity of ridding himself of a party who have universally opposed him, and driven him into sanguinary and expensive wars.

It is absurd to suppose that the large naval and military force of Mahomed Ali is required for "self "defence against Turkish tyranny*." His navy appears almost useless, and as if formed merely for display; whilst his army is kept up for offensive rather than defensive purposes, as his wars in Syria, and his present hostile engagements in the Hedjaz, and against the Abyssinians and Blacks in Soodan, sufficiently prove.

I cannot omit one more allusion to "Egypt as it

* "Egypt as it is in 1837," p. 18.

" is in 1837," to shew the profound knowledge and deep philosophy of its author, in advancing a theory upon the regeneration of Egypt. " I am," says Mr. Waghorn, " as firmly convinced that Egypt " is regenerating herself, and will resume her former " station amongst the nations of the earth, and " become *as fruitful as she was in the time of the* " *Pharaohs*, and that in *ten years*, after English " interests are fairly introduced*." And again, (at p. 28) he says, " My conviction that Egypt " would, in *twenty years hence, be more fertile* " *than in the time of the Pharaohs*, is founded on " the known powers of the steam engine," &c. The first opinion must allude, I conceive, to the population; the second, to the soil. We will now see how the first speculation can be applied to the country under discussion. According to Diodorus Siculus (lib. i., cap. 31), the population of Egypt, in the time of the Pharaohs, was 7,000,000; and I shall assume this as the highest standard at which the population arrived during the Pharaonic dynasties. Mr. Lane, to whom the public are deeply indebted for a faithful account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians, has published some interesting remarks on the population of Egypt. A few years ago it was calculated that Egypt contained 2,500,000 souls. " Of this number, 1,200,000 " were males, and one-third of this number (400,000)

* " Egypt as it is in 1837," p. 27.

" men fit for military service; from this latter " number the present Pacha of Egypt has taken, " at the least 200,000 (that is, one half of the most " serviceable portion of the male population), to " form and recruit his armies of regular troops, and " for the service of his navy. The further loss " caused by withdrawing so many men from their " wives, or preventing their marrying, during ten " years, must surely far exceed 300,000; conse- " quently, the present population may be calculated " at less than 2,000,000*."

Mr. Lane left Egypt, I believe, in 1835, and since then the population has decreased so considerably, that I think it would be difficult to find that it exceeds at the present moment 1,500,000. It is preposterous to suppose that *ten years*, the time allowed by the author of "Egypt as it is in 1837," could see the population of Egypt brought to what it was in the time of the Pharaohs. I am at a loss to conceive how "English interests" can operate so powerfully upon local generation. The prejudices of Mahomedans are so strong, and their scruples so great, that they never can sanction intermarriage with those of a different religious persuasion. It has been

* " An account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians," by E. W. Lane, p. 24—27. An excellent account of the population of Egypt in the time of the Pharaohs, is published in the Appendix to the " Lettres écrites d'Egypte et de Nubie, en 1828 et 1829," par Champollion le jeune.

shown, that the female population of Egypt far exceeds that of the male, and though the Mooslim religion permits a plurality of wives, many for the sake of domestic happiness, and many on the score of poverty, are compelled to be content with one. Is it not therefore unaccountable to suppose, that in *ten years* after the introduction of "English interests," the population of Egypt shall be augmented from 2,000,000 to 7,000,000 persons?

I have now, my Lord, laid before you a brief, but true and impartial statement of the political and physical condition of Egypt and Soodan, and your Lordship will observe, that the accounts which I have given of these countries differ very materially from those published by the author of "Egypt as it is in 1837." With Mr. Waghorn, I never have had the least communication, and I am merely acquainted with the name of that gentleman, from his having formerly, with others, drawn the attention of the Honourable East India Company to the establishment of steam navigation with India, and from the pamphlet which he has recently circulated. Finding that it was so directly at variance with facts, I felt annoyed at seeing such a garbled account of Egypt issued from a British press, and therefore have published a statement, the truth of which I feel assured will be borne out by the observations of all future travellers.

The principal object of Mr. Waghorn appears to

have been, to place Mahomed Ali in such a favourable position with the British Government, that its attention might be attracted to becoming a party, ere long, to acknowledge his independence. But how could such a measure be adopted, whilst the Pacha tacitly and openly permits and sanctions the atrocities which I have related?

It must be borne in mind that Egypt and Soodan are colonies of the Porte; why then should England be driven into an unnecessary and expensive war with Turkey, so long as every facility is afforded for communication to India by the Red Sea? I have already mentioned, in a note (at p. 24), that the dread of British interference has for some time prevented Mahomed Ali sending troops against Abyssinia. If, under no restrictions, this fear would no longer exist—if England should place the Pacha independent of the Porte, I feel convinced that, flattered and deceived as he is, by courtiers and intriguers, who have access to the divan, that he would never be our ally in case of war; that he would soon endeavour to cut off all communication with India, and assisted by Russia, who would in all probability come forward upon the occasion, frustrate measures which must eventually prove of incalculable benefit to Great Britain.

Let me earnestly entreat your Lordship to regard most attentively any change that may take place in the political position of Egypt. It appears obvious that France is anxious to make Egypt her own; to

add to her already considerable African colonies; of why should she permit so many of her subjects to be employed in the service of the Pacha, and assist in transforming the customs, habits, and manners of the East, into those which essentially belong to herself? She is not ignorant of the fact, that a very large proportion of the Fellahs of Egypt and Soodan are dissipated, decayed, and destroyed, and that there is ample room for colonizing the valley of the Nile, from her increasing, active, and intelligent population. She is aware of the fertility of the Delta, Upper Egypt, and Soodan, and she is also acquainted with the fact, that whilst from the former she might increase her wealth by its productions in grain and cotton, she might augment her revenue from the latter, by the importation of grain, cotton, indigo, senna, tobacco, sugar, coffee, and gum arabic. She cannot be blind to the fact, that, under a settled and peaceable government, a trade would speedily be resumed with Abyssinia, and the countries to the south of Sennar and Kordofan, and that ebony, ivory, ostrich feathers, and gold, would form profitable articles of commerce to her merchants. She is conversant with the resources of Egypt and Soodan; she knows them to be abundant; she is aware that the fair trader is now driven out of the market by the Leviathan of monopoly, and that the exports from the upper countries are daily diminishing. And lastly, she possesses sufficient intelligence to foresee

that commerce with these parts can only again be resumed under a government which protects trade, and gives encouragement to mercantile transactions.

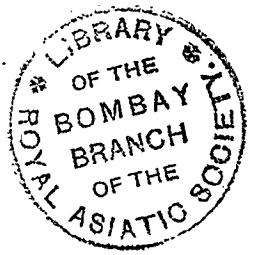
I have the honour to remain,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient and humble Servant,

ARTHUR T. HOLROYD.

Cairo,
October 27th, 1837.



LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

00027245

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 July, 2018